April
May
June
2004

"Rest well, yet sleep lightly and hear the call, if again sounded, to provide firepower for freedom…"

THE JERSEYMAN

"...Taps,taps, lights out!
All hands turn into your bunks!
Maintain silence about the decks!
The smoking lamp is out in all berthing spaces!"

INSIDE...

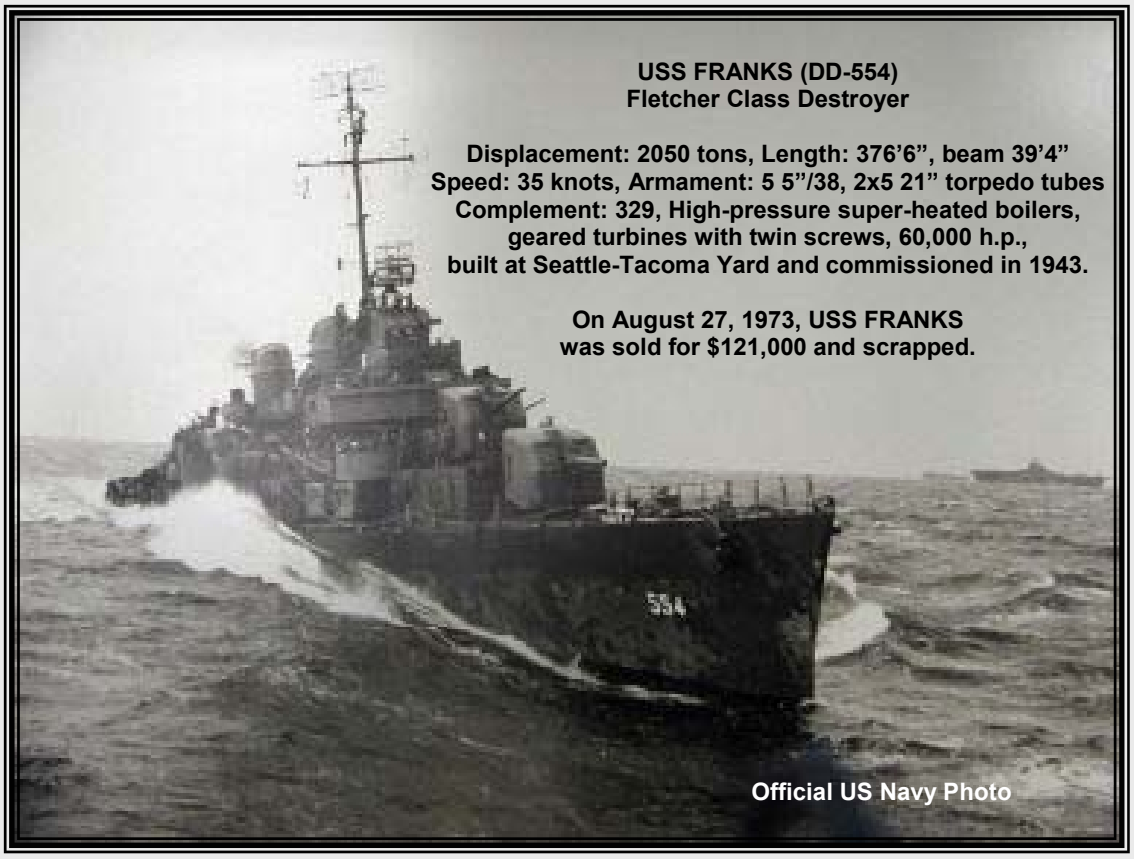
USS FRANKS (DD-554), and USS NEW JERSEY collide - April 2, 1945
Battleship crewmen - *Remembering their ships...*
General Paul W. Tibbets, USAF, Ret., and Commander of *"Enola Gay"* - visits Battleship New Jersey
Weekend encampments aboard the Battleship NEW JERSEY
Battleship New Jersey Volunteers - Past and Present

HISTORY CALL

If you were a crewman aboard any ship at the Battle for Leyte Gulf in October of 1944,
***The Jerseyman* is asking for your story to be included in our October 2004 issue...**

APRIL 2, 1945… USS FRANKS COLLISION WITH USS NEW JERSEY

THE JERSEYMAN
APRIL 2004


USS FRANKS (DD-554)
Fletcher Class Destroyer
Displacement: 2050 tons, Length: 376'6", beam 39'4"
Speed: 35 knots, Armament: 5 5"/38, 2x5 21" torpedo tubes
Complement: 329, High-pressure super-heated boilers,
geared turbines with twin screws, 60,000 h.p.,
built at Seattle-Tacoma Yard and commissioned in 1943.
On August 27, 1973, USS FRANKS
was sold for $121,000 and scrapped.
554
Official US Navy Photo

At 2112 hours on April 2, 1945, **USS NEW JERSEY** went full astern as **USS FRANKS** cut across her bow during night maneuvers off of Okinawa. The destroyer scraped down the battleship's portside, and her bridge was raked by the massive 15 ton port anchor of **NEW JERSEY**. The captain of **USS FRANKS, CDR D.R. Stephans,** was critically injured and did not survive his injuries - a few days later, he was buried at sea.

In this issue**,** we include stories from the men that were aboard both ships, and we want to thank all hands for sharing what they remember. Because of space limits, we regret we had to shorten some of these stories…

APRIL 2, 1945… USS FRANKS COLLISION WITH USS NEW JERSEY

First Lieutenant - USS FRANKS
Leon Cooper, LCDR, USNR (Ret.), Los Angeles, California

"At the time I was a Lt (jg) and was qualified to stand watch on the bridge. I was designated the First Lieutenant, who is charged with damage control on a Fletcher class destroyer. We had had an executive officer replacement who lasted about 3 weeks when he jumped overboard one night. Fortunately a destroyer astern heard him yelling in the water and rescued him. But he never returned to the ship. So our Chief Engineer, Gerald F. Case, a mustang from the engineer ratings, became the exec and his assistant the new Chief Engineer. I roomed in officer's country with Gerry. A destroyer had taken a mine not too long before the collision, so we were all quite apprehensive.

The Franks had achieved a reputation as a plane guard. Our boatswain mates had rigged up a stretcher with floats and we put swimmers in the water with the stretcher who took it to the pilot. They put him in the stretcher, at the side of the Franks we rigged a davit which then scooped up the pilot as though he was in a sieve. So the Franks was designated plane guard when night carrier operations were started in TF 38/58 quite regularly.

On that particular night we were called in to plane guard, which put us about 1,000 yards on the port quarter of the carrier. When operations were completed we were supposed to fish tail to slow our advance as we returned to our station in the circular screen which was in the back of the formation. For some reason Captain Stephen decided to show agility and turned sharply and returned to station. So the Franks was steaming at about 18 knots in one direction while the rest of the formation was steaming in the opposite direction at 18 knots. The relative speed was, therefore about 36 knots.

The task group commander, as was customary at the conclusion of air operations, returned the formation of the task group to its base course. Thus, trying to determine who was where on the radar scope was impossible. Fortunately the New Jersey had a senior watch officer on board. He could have cut us in half, but realizing the situation, he turned the battleship sharply to starboard. Thus the port anchor swept down the side of the Franks. It tore off the port wing of the bridge, twisted the searchlight platform on the forward stack from athwartship to fore and aft, and picked up a quad 40 mm mount from the gun deck and deposited it on the main deck.

Down below Gerry and I heard the terrific sound of the collision; we quickly dressed, as we had just gone to bed, grabbed life jackets and ran on deck. He went to the bridge, and I started to assess any damage, as we both thought we had hit a mine. Not seeing any damage on the starboard side, I ran to the bridge where Gerry had taken command, the Captain had run to the port side of the bridge, where the port wing was missing and fallen to the main deck. I believe that Lt. Bob Numbers, the communications officer, was the OOD when the collision occurred, and he was swept into the flag bags located in the after part of the bridge deck. Lt. (jg) Mark Lillis was on the bridge, but I'm not sure who had the conn. We lit our running lights, I believe, to ward off any further collisions.

Gerry ordered me to inspect the ship below decks to see if we had suffered any damage which might imperil our water tight security. I did so with several of my men and found no damage to the hull or below decks. We were not taking on water, and we still had engine capability and steerage way. I so reported to Gerry.

The Captain was taken to sick bay where the doctor tried working on him. Apparently, a broken rib had punctured his lung. Lt. Numbers was cut up around the scalp and bleeding, but not seriously hurt. The crew maintained order, while a muster was conducted to make sure no one was missing.

The next day we joined a fueling group and the Captain was transferred to a fleet oiler, which had a doctor with better facilities. But Captain Stephen did not survive and was buried at sea several days later.

Gerry took the Franks to Ulithi, where we were ordered alongside a destroyer tender. But our damage was too great for them. Anyway, the Franks was due for an upgrading of its armament and radar. So we were ordered to Pearl Harbor, where a new regular captain, Gene Henry, came aboard to take command. Gene Henry's background included that of being an Ensign at Pearl Harbor on Dec 7, 1941... Then we went to Bremerton for our refitting.

Gerry Case is now dead. I'll find out who survives when I attend the Franks reunion in October. Mark Lillis is an attorney with the Library of Congress."

P.S. "I should have added that Gerald F. Case went on to become a four-striper. He commanded an APD during the Korean War and was the Director (OIC) of the Naval Sonar School in San Diego. Another new N.R.O.T.C. ensign joined the FRANKS when I did. His name was Jas A. Boult. Gerry worked us over; I with the first division on deck, and James in the engine room. We called ourselves "Case - Hardened Ensigns."

APRIL 2, 1945…
USS FRANKS COLLISION
WITH
USS NEW JERSEY

THE JERSEYMAN
APRIL 2004

CHIEF MACHINISTS MATE VICTOR P. FELTES, rode USS NEW JERSEY every day during World War 2, and from the day he made Chief Petty Officer on January 1, 1944, engine room #4 was his responsibility. Chief Feltes also began a handwritten logbook, detailing the events of each day that he spent aboard...

"Nov 26, 1942 - Received my orders from Bureau of Naval Personnel to report within 30 days for outfitting and commissioning of USS NEW JERSEY…"), and a last fitting diary entry of: "*January 26, 1946 - "Homeward Bound!!"*

With thanks to Curator Scott Kodger, and Archives Manager Bob Walters, we can quote from the Chief's entry describing the collision between USS NEW JERSEY and USS FRANKS...

"April 2, 1945 @ 2112 hours...

Ship goes full astern as DD FRANKS cut across our bow, is hit a glancing blow, and bounces along Port side. Report came in that the Skipper and OOD were the only casualties with half the bridge torn off. It was back in formation in 1/2 hour. It was just missed again by Carrier off our Port Quarter. NJ has seams ruptured and taking a little water forward at Frame 45. Shock of collision could be felt. Was playing Pi-nochle in C.P.O. Quarters at time. We were guide ship and were not at fault. Fuel oil could be smelled topside after collision. Running into heavy seas and storm.

April 3, 1945 -

Supposed to fuel from tanker and due to rough weather, didn't complete fueling due to late start. Report the DD Franks went in for repairs."

Editor's Note:

We want to thank shipmate Charlie Welch (below) for helping put *The Jerseyman* in contact with Chief Feltes' family. According to son Richard, one of the older Feltes brothers later "served as a Navy Pilot," and another as an officer in the Air Force. *"Victor's wife Ramona, resides in W. Chicago, Illinois. She remains active at age 84 in managing the largest outdoor farm fall festival in Northern Illinois - a business that Victor Feltes started before his untimely death in 1968."*

" I can shed some light on the night the USS Franks kissed us on the port side. I happened to have the 8 to 12 watch that night on the saturated side of the boiler. I seem to remember we were in heavy sea and steaming somewhere around 20 plus knots. We seemed to not have any trouble, everything was quiet in the boiler room when all of a sudden we got quite a shake up, when the engine room got orders to "back down!" … that caused me to lose control of my steam pressure, and to maintain at 600psi and 1200 degrees over on the superheated side of the boiler. Having to shut our steam pressure down so quick resulted in blowing the safety valves on topside. During those years there was not one single part in operating those boilers on automatic. It had to be controlled manually by at least four guys working closely together, That night we had our hands full and I am sure it was the same in the engine room…

Last year while I was visiting the New Jersey in Camden I had a conversation with a sailor who was on the Franks and we discussed that unfortunate time on April 2 1945. He told me his captain died from injuries of that accident.

When I was signed on the Jersey at Pearl Harbor I was placed in the B Div and pulled watch in the # 4 fireroom for about a year , Then after we came back in May 1945 for dry dock in Bremerton, Wash I was transferred to the Oil King Dept . I believe in June we steamed out and headed back toward Japan .

My rating in the B Div was WT3/c . My time spent in #4 fire room Included most of the time on the Saturated side of the boiler controlling steam pressure at 600psi . But we were trained to take over other duties in case of emergency

I served the last year aboard in the Oil Testing Lab Testing all fresh water making sure the boilers received salt free water from the evaporators, and making sure the oil service tanks feeding the boilers were salt free. We could not allow our boilers to be shut down due to contaminated oil or water. My battle station was in the lower handling room for one of the five inch guns. For the last 48 years I have lived in New Baltimore a small little town twenty miles west of Cincinnati.

After some five months laying at anchor in Yokosuka Japan and on Jan 29 1946 we pulled out and arrived in San Francisco on Feb 10, 1946. When we sailed under that Golden Gate Bridge that day I knew we were home to stay..."

Charles H. Welch, WT3/c, - Harrison, Ohio
USS NEW JERSEY Aug 1944 to April 1946

APRIL 2, 1945… USS FRANKS COLLISION WITH USS NEW JERSEY

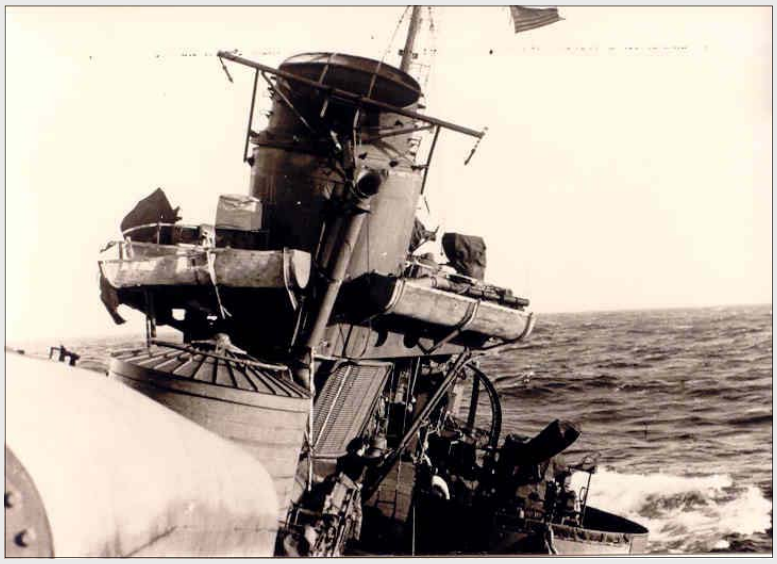
THE JERSEYMAN
APRIL 2004

"In the aft berthing compartment, all the lights went out, and the ship began rolling back and forth. I was in my shorts, but as quickly as I could I ran topside, because I figured we were going to be going overboard. When I got to my battle station, half of the port side of the bridge was sliced away. That's when I learned that the Franks had run into the battleship New Jersey. Her anchor was at the same height as the destroyer's bridge.

Following the immediate aftermath, Captain Stephan was transported to a fleet oiler for medical attention. We knew that he was critically injured; he had some ribs broken into his lungs. He died about a day or two later, and I recall leaving our ship in a whaleboat to go to the oiler to attend his funeral service. His body was in a canvas bag with an American flag draped over it. After a brief ceremony and eulogy, the platform with the bag on it was raised, and the body slid into the water. It was a very sad experience."

QM3 Michael BAK
USS FRANKS (DD-554)
Surf City, New Jersey

USS FRANKS collision photos are courtesy of Michael Bak



"I was on the 4:00 to 8 watch, stationed on the forward 40mm guns on April 2, 1945, and the night of the collision with NEW JERSEY.

From our position aft of the Yorktown, the NEW JERSEY was about 350deg to 355deg off the port bow. We proceeded to pass the ship, and had to cross the bow of the NEW JERSEY to the screen position. I don't recall if the task force turn was completed.

I do know the OOD of the NEW JERSEY had to make a hard starboard turn to avoid the FRANKS. The FRANKS and NEW JERSEY were port to port. Damage to the FRANKS was portside, above the waterline. No damage below the waterline.

The anchor of the NEW JERSEY hit the portside of the bridge on FRANKS. It took off the #42 gun mount, whale boat, #44 gun mount, damaged searchlight, damaged the #2 stack, and the signalman's boot on the port side."

GM3/c Arthur L. Raschke, "O" Division
USS FRANKS (DD-554), my GQ was the 44mm midships on the portside
December 1943 to March 1946
Bellevue, Ohio

APRIL 2, 1945… USS FRANKS COLLISION WITH USS NEW JERSEY

THE JERSEYMAN
APRIL 2004

"My name is Charles Ryan. I was asleep in compartment C-205 when the BB New Jersey rammed us at 22:00. Either the bump or the quiet (screws had stopped) woke me. On deck I was greeted by High Tension cable swinging from the mast head leaving weld strips on deck as ship rolled. Signal man (Hullar?) met me and told me he just left the flag bag on the port wing of the bridge to go to the head. On coming out he saw port wing of the bridge, Captain's gig, and davits all down on deck. I went down to the after fire room to answer bells.

I was then informed: the captain and Lt. Numbers, port wing of bridge, #42 40mm, captains gig, davits, were all down on the main deck. The captain had a broken leg and lung punctured by ribs, Lt. Numbers had a fractured skull. They transferred the Captain to tanker 043 at 10:00. Both Franks and tanker were rolling heavily and lines between ships were tight as we rolled, and then became loose. Word came from the tanker that the Captain died at 13:41. He was buried at 17:00.

Note – On March 15 our executive officer was picked out of the water by a screening destroyer. The Executive officer refused to come back aboard! Hence Lt. Case (former MM 1/c) became our captain."

Charles H. Ryan, WT1/c,
USS Franks (DD-554)
Queens, New York

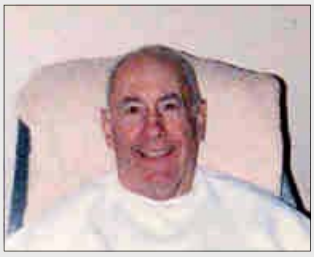
"Yes, I was aboard the USS FRANKS, April 2, 1945 when she collided with the NEW JERSEY. I remember it was late at night, and awful foggy. We were on a zig-zag course and zigged when we should have zagged I guess… Our depth charges broke loose from their mountings and rolled all over the deck. The collision with NEW JERSEY ripped the side of the bridge off, and the signal lights, and search lights too. Our Captain was killed, and I think the first Lieutenant. They were on the bridge and knocked down on to the lower deck.

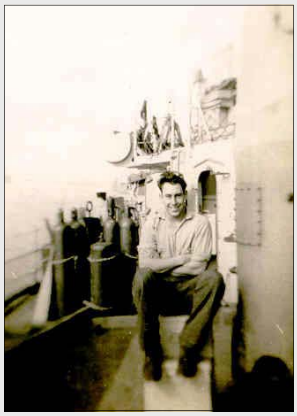
Our Executive Officer headed us away from the fleet for repairs. We had no protection, the batteries were knocked out so we couldn't fire our guns. For two weeks we were a crippled ship in the war zone. After we reached Pearl Harbor, they said we needed to go stateside for repairs. All the crew got 30 days leave - not all at once, but after 14 months aboard ship, we got to go home for 30 days!

I was aboard from the time FRANKS was commissioned in 1943 until she was decommissioned in 1946. She was built in Seattle."

William John Corrigan TM 3/c, USS FRANKS, Challis, Idaho

"We were at GQ when we received word that an airplane went down, and we were assigned to pick up the pilot. It was dark out and I don't know what time it was, but I was on watch in the forward five inch gun. We were going full speed cutting through our group, when I heard and felt the loudest crash of my life. At first, I thought a bomb had hit us, or an airplane. The next thing I remember was me starting to run. I looked down and saw this huge hole and the crashing water coming into the FRANKS.





It seemed like we were dead in the water, and I never did see the NEW JERSEY. I heard someone say that the skipper was dead, and I headed for the fantail. I thought the FRANKS would sink "Was I ever scared!!!"

It was almost like someone took a big knife and tried to cut of the front of the ship. Then we headed for Hawaii for repairs. We all got some liberty, and really enjoyed that. After a short time, we headed for the states, more repairs, and we all to go home on leave and that was great! When the FRANKS got repaired, we went back for more. After Iwo Jima and Okinawa, we ended up at San Diego when the war was over. Most of the "cans" were mothballed, and that's the last I heard of the FRANKS..."

Lyle Lieb
USS FRANKS
Omaha, Nebraska

APRIL 2, 1945… USS FRANKS COLLISION WITH USS NEW JERSEY

THE JERSEYMAN
APRIL 2004

"That night I was in the electrical room which was on the port side aft, watching some guys play poker and shooting the bull etc… All of a sudden the propeller shafts started to wind down real fast! We all looked at one another and then came the wham bam sound as the Franks rolled to starboard. My first thought was we had hit a mine. All the guys ran for the aft hatch gangway and out to the main deck. As my battle station was right there under the 4th 5 inch gun mount, I ducked inside and grabbed my Mae West life jacket. The franks was rocking back and forth some, and out on deck I looked on the port side and there loomed the NEW JERSEY which looked like an 8 story building as I looked up at her.

We could see ammo laying on the port side deck and one guy forward had to be restrained from going over the side. (I heard later that he had been on a cruiser that went down.)

After all was secured, we moved away and the next day the captain, who was knocked off the bridge and down onto the main deck was transferred to an oil tanker that had a doctor on board. He died after and was buried at sea. The task force we were in was on a zig-zag course and I recall a junior officer was on watch on the bridge, and must have gotten off course, which caused the collision. In day light, we could see that the bridge, both our 2 stacks, 40 and 20 millimeter gun mounts all on the port side were torn out. No damage below the water line. The loose ammo was thrown overboard. It was a scary night as I was just 18 years old and thought we were going down, but luck was with us as no under water leaks etc…. We had orders to sail for Hawaii, and on to Bremerton. Washington for repairs. We all got a 30 day leave. It sure was a memorable night…"

Jack Orwig, F1/c
USS FRANKS (DD-554)
Williamsport, Pennsylvania

"I understand that you are collecting data on the collision of the destroyer FRANKS and battleship NEW JERSEY on 2 April 1945. I was a "ninety day wonder" and still an ensign at the time of the collision. I was originally sonar officer, but the navigator jumped overboard, and since I was the only officer that was familiar with celestial navigation, the captain gave the job to me. (I was later confirmed by the Bureau of Ships.)

I was part way up to the bridge to give the skipper the 2000 position report, when there was a violent jolt. I immediately thought we had been torpedoed or hit a mine. On the darkened bridge the badly shaken helmsman said that we had been hit, and the port side of the bridge was missing. I went into my navigator's shack and put on a life-jacket.

There was some initial confusion, but the damage-control gang insured that we had water-tight integrity. The captain was taken to sick-bay where he dictated his final report before dying. He took full responsibility and exonerated the OD, Bob Numbers. Bob received a concussion but I understand he recovered. Gerry Case, the executive officer then assumed command. We then joined a tanker group, and returned to Pearl Harbor for initial repairs before continuing on to Bremerton.

I was aboard the FRANKS about two years. My final trip was to San Pedro for decommissioning. I have no photos, and to my knowledge, there was no board of inquiry. It was an unforgettable episode in my life and I am glad it is being documented."

Charles C. Worthington
Navigator, USS Franks (DD-554)
Royal Oak, Maryland

"I was on the FRANKS when we crashed with the NEW JERSEY. I was sleeping in my bunk in the aft section of the FRANKS. The first I knew of it, was when a guy was waking me up to get on a life jacket and get topside because we had a collision. I remember that the screws had stopped and that the only lights on were the emergency lights. I got topside and there was junk rolling all over. I don't wake up easy. Once when I was younger, we had a water problem at home. Water and plaster from the ceiling above my bed fell on me and I slept through it. My family had to wake me then too.

One other thing—we crossed the date line on my 21st birthday so I had an extra birthday, but it didn't help to get me Social Security a year early!"

Donald H. Hallman, USS FRANKS - Germfask, Michigan,

"I went on the 4 to 8 watch, and was in the Ice House when we went in to full reverse. The Ice House is the main refrigeration system for the cold storage, and is located aft of Nr. 3 turret on the 3rd level below decks. We shook and shivered, and came to a complete stop. I went topside and saw the FRANKS to our port. I did not know how bad she was damaged at the time."

Dale Palm, MM3c, E Div. USS NEW JERSEY
from 1944 to June of 1946
Naples, Florida

APRIL 2, 1945… USS FRANKS COLLISION WITH USS NEW JERSEY

THE JERSEYMAN
APRIL 2004

" My rate was Watertender first class. I stood no watches since I was "Oil King," and all I had to do was keep track of the oil and water consumption, and supervise fueling details…

I was in the head, (one deck above the after engine room,) when I felt the ship slowing down, then heard the reverse turbines kick in… there was the explosive noise of metal being crushed, and we took a sharp roll to starboard… I went forward on the starboard main deck toward the bridge. I heard moans coming from the port side, and found our captain, Commander Stephans, lying among a lot of debris on the main deck. One leg was turned at a severe angle from his body, and he was in great pain. I tried to comfort him and told him I was going for help. Before leaving him he asked, "How's my ship?" Those may have been his last words…

WT 1/c **Gene Prata,**
St. Simons Island, Georgia
USS FRANKS (DD-554)

NOTICE:

Beginning in May 2004, we plan to take new photos of all ship's volunteers for *The Jerseyman* files.

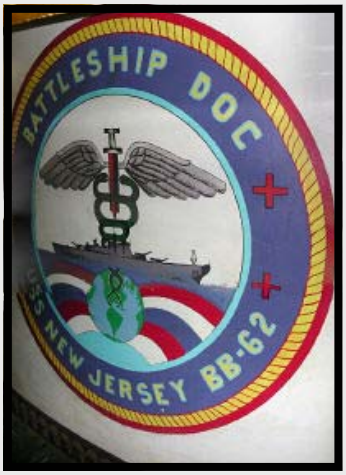
Time schedules, and ship locations for taking photos on different days of the week (including weekends,) will be posted in the First Class and Docent lounges. Please look for them, and Thanks!

Master Chief Tom Helvig, USN (Ret.)
Volunteer Writer/Editor *The Jerseyman*

Archives Manager, volunteer, and former USS NEW JERSEY Quartermaster Bob Walters -

"This is how we did it in the 1950's…"

USS NEW JERSEY ARTWORK AND SIGNAGE…



THE JERSEYMAN
APRIL 2004

GENERAL PAUL TIBBETS TO VISIT BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY JUNE 8, 2004…

1944 – 2004…

The year 1944 held a number of very historic dates in WW2. Probably the most well known, was the Normandy Invasion on "D-Day", the 6th of June 1944, and followed by the only major confrontation between US and Japanese battleships in the Battle of Surigao Straits - 25 October 1944.

It was also in September of 1944, that **USAAF Colonel Paul W. Tibbets** first received his briefing on the "Manhattan Project," the code name for the development of the atomic bomb. He then went on to train the B-29 unit designated to deliver the atom bomb from an airbase on Tinian Island in the Marianas.

Almost one year later, on July 26,1945, **USS INDIANAPOLIS (CA-35)** played her part, when she delivered the atomic bomb known as "Little-Boy" to Tinian island, along with two technical specialist "passengers" that were assigned to arm the bomb in flight. On her return home only 3 days later, *USS Indianapolis* was sunk with great loss of life.

A few short days later, on the 6th of August 1945, **Paul Tibbets** and his crew took off from Tinian Island, the *Enola Gay* headed for Hiroshima with the atomic bomb, and into the history books...

Now 60 years later, **General Tibbets** is again returning to the Pacific, and will serve as the keynote speaker in mid-June of 2004 for the 60th commemoration of the battles of Saipan and Tinian. **General Tibbets** wears the Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Purple Heart, Legion of Merit, European Campaign Medal, Joint Staff Commendation Medal, American Defense Service Medal, W.W.II Victory Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, and American Campaign Medals.

BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY NOTICE:

On Tuesday, June 8, 2004 Battleship New Jersey will host a visit by General Paul Tibbets, for a book signing event to be held aboard ship—most likely in the wardroom. The planned book signing time is currently scheduled from 1230 to 1600 hours. For more up-to-date information, please call Mr. Jack Willard at (856) 966-1652.

DROPPING OF THE FIRST ATOMIC BOMB… FROM THE WW2 USS NEW JERSEY LOGBOOK OF CHIEF MACHINISTS MATE VICTOR P. FELTES, USN…

" AUGUST 8, 1945 - Bombardment Wake Island
At 0100 we started to bombard Wake Is. with 16" opening up at 18,000 yards. Return fire was encountered from the beach when we closed to work them over with 5". 3 shell splashes within 300 yards of ship were observed during day firing, and we thought they were 8" shells. We left the island with fires burning. The BILOXI also took part in the bombardment around 2000."

"August 9, 1945…
We were given the news of Russian entry in the Pacific War at a special newscast at 1200. This and the atomic bomb should see the end of the war in the near future, I hope!"

"August 10, 1945…
Anchored Eniwetok, Marshall Islands. Another atomic bomb has been dropped on Japan! Dope is we will be here for a couple of weeks with Halsey coming aboard on the 21st. Fleet is off of Saipan Bombarding, and making air strikes yet…"

"August 13, 1945…
1315 - Word is passed over P.A. system that Japan had accepted surrender terms. Ships in the harbor are blowing the whistles, explosions can be seen ashore, and guys are throwing their hats over the side. Really sounded too good to be true, which proved to be the case and a false report had been received."

"August 15, 1945...
1645 - It's official now, the war is over! Who would have thought it possible. There was no celebration at all aboard NJ, tho I hear they are really celebrating in the states. Usual whistles blowing etc from ships in the harbor. Seems too good to be true that Japan accepted our peace terms with out an invasion of her homeland. The atomic bomb and Russian entry in the war saved a million American lives!"

BATTLESHIP CREWMEN - REMEMBER THE SHIPS…

THE JERSEYMAN
APRIL 2004

Boatswain's Mate 3/c (Korea) Charles Jacobus, Auburndale, Florida, - USS NEW JERSEY in 1953…

"Going back in time to my service aboard USS NEW JERSEY, I recall hearing chimes being sounded by the Stewards Mate as he strolled through officers country. I wonder if this hand-held percussion type chime is still aboard? This was done to inform the officers it was chow time."

Seaman Ray De Wolf, Sussex County, New Jersey, - USS IOWA in 1956…

"I was a powder handler for the center gun of Turret #2, and sitting in that little box, I had plenty of time to think while they dumped powder into the tray… but If I had been able to stay on the IOWA, I'd have stayed 20 years!"

(Photo shows the cramped "little box," of left and center powder hoist operator positions. These gunnery positions are located 5 decks below in the turret lower powder handling rooms.)

Coxswain Bob Whomsley, Cherry Hill, New Jersey - USS SOUTH DAKOTA in 1942...

"Sometime around October or November 1942, and during my 15 months aboard USS South Dakota (BB-57), we were carrying 3 Vought, OS2U Kingfisher floatplanes for scout-observation. One was located on each of two catapults, and one on a wheeled carriage on deck on the fantail. I was assigned to the Third Division which had responsibilities for maintenance and operations involving the fantail. I had witnessed countless catapult launchings of the Kingfishers, but one "catshot" in particular, was memorable for its frightening possibilities.

On this particular day a plane was being readied for launching on the starboard catapult. It carried a 100 pound bomb under each wing. It's engine was reaching full throttle and caused the aircraft to vibrate considerably, when almost at the instant of launch the inboard bomb fell from the rack and landed flat on deck near a group of us Deck Apes. We all stood transfixed and stared at the weapon. Finally, two guys recovered their senses, picked it up, and threw it overboard. We were all fortunate that the distance it fell did not permit it to land nose down, otherwise I would not now be writing of this experience of 62 years ago. I also remember that the launch was scrubbed." **(Bob Whomsley is a volunteer aboard Battleship New Jersey.)**

- Seaman 1/c W. Marshall Schmidt, Princeton, New Jersey - USS WISCONSIN in 1944...

"I was a Seaman 1/c in the original crew of USS Wisconsin BB64 in the N Department (Quartermaster.) I remember well the typhoon that hit Halsey before he could refuel our cans, since he only refueled every 4 days. The Wisconsin (64) was in the same task force as was BB 61 (Iowa), 63 (Missouri) and 62 (New Jersey) We were all together in Cobra. My comment about Halsey's carelessness still stands. Spruance always topped off the cans every morning. The loss of those ships and their crew was completely unnecessary. That typhoon was awesome. When I stood on the bridge, I was looking up into the next wave to hit us. The difficult part was the aftermath. The entire fleet searched for the missing men. After dark, there was no noise permitted as the crew members on watch manned the side of Wisky listening in vain for voices crying out to be saved."

Machine Repairman 2/c Ken Kersch, New Brunswick, New Jersey - USS NEW JERSEY—1968/1969

"After we unreped from the first ship in Nam they pulled away from us after the lines were dropped. Capt Snyder would never let that happen again. He found one of the ships company who played the trumpet and had him learn the William Tell overture along with the other bugle calls. He was to become the ships bugler. We could hear him practicing in various parts of the ship. Then the next unrep when the lines were dropped you heard him playing as we pulled away from the other ship. And that was the way it was anytime we unrepped. Whether we were receiving supplies or giving them to another ship. There were also the bugle calls for taps, chow, reveille etc…" **(Oct 1968 photo of SN Robert Boling (left), and SN Bert Trottier, Jr. Photo caption: "These two men are the only authorized buglers in the Navy…" (US Navy photo courtesy of RADM J. Edward Snyder, Jr., USN (Ret.))**

(Ken Kersch is a volunteer aboard Battleship New Jersey.)

Boatswain's Mate 1/c (SW) Charles Edward Brown, Jr., USN/Ret., St. Louis, Missouri - USS IOWA April of 1984…

"BB-61 did something I know BB-62, and BB-63 never did. It was the first time out that IOWA fired all her guns, one 16" at a time. Then a nine gun salvo. Then the 16" and 5" guns together! I've always thought the 5inch 38's were much worse in the sharp sounds they would make. The 16" guns were not near as bad…"

(Discussion: In defense of **USS IOWA's** sister ships, simultaneous firing of all nine 16" guns, along with all twelve 5-inch guns did occur aboard **USS NEW JERSEY** (BB-62.) Although no exact date is provided, a photo of the firing event (Mid-1980's) is on Page 147 of Paul Stillwell's book ***"Battleships,"*** published in 2001 by Friedman/Fairfax. Guess we can expect a few comments from **USS MISSOURI**, and **USS WISCONSIN**...)

(Editor's note:
We're pleased to display this retirement day (September 30, 1995) photo of "Boats" Charles Brown in this issue. When we first started publishing *The Jerseyman* in January of 2002, "Boats" has been there from just about day one, and has sent volumes of battleship history stories, personal photographs, and anecdotes. *The Jerseyman* photos of USS IOWA tied up in Suisun Bay last year, and the idea for listing US Navy ship's nicknames found in our recent issues of *The Jerseyman*, all began with "Boats" Charlie Brown, and we thank him for all of it.

These are the ships served by this dedicated sailor during his navy career… USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59), USS MT. WHITNEY (LCC-20/Plankowner,) USS IOWA (BB-61/Plankowner,) USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62), USS WABASH (AOR-5), and USS DIXON (AS-37.) It was also on the same day that "Boats" Brown retired, that his last ship, USS DIXON was decommissioned.

A well earned BRAVO ZULU to you shipmate, and thank you for your service!

"On June 7th, 1954, off Norfolk, VA, the four Iowa Class Battleships were steaming side by side for the first time ever in order to have aerial photos taken of them. The photos were taken by a Naval Photographer in a helicopter. As soon as the photos were taken the battleships were ordered to spread out and wait for further orders.

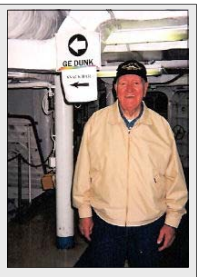
The film was dropped on to the Wisconsin and we were asked to process one roll to determine if there was a printable image on the film. I was thrilled that the Wisconsin was picked to process the film. We were ordered not to make prints and just to return the negatives with our comments on the quality of the image. Since none of the other photographers wanted the responsibility of processing the film, it fell on my shoulders and I was scared that I would goof in the processing.

I remember coming out of the darkroom and stating that the negatives were good and printable. However, I also remember thinking, "I have control of the four battleships!" Should I tell them the film was blank and to re-shoot?" But I was young, and scared, so scared that I really didn't dare make a print for myself. Once they knew that the film was O.K. the word was given and the four battleships went their separate ways.

This was almost 50 years ago and seems like it was only yesterday. It left quite an impression on me to see the four battleships in one place at the same time. It was an awesome sight!"

Dom Menta, PH3, EX Div.
USS Wisconsin BB-64
1952-1956
Tannersville, Pennsylvania
(Editor's Note: Shipmate Dom Menta is Historian of USS WISCONSIN Association)

GE DUNK!!! What in the world is a GE DUNK??



"For 60 years, whenever we would order that creamy dessert, my entire family would always use the term "GE DUNK"… 2 years ago my son and daughter offered to drive my wife and me to Camden, N.J. to see the battleship. It had been 59 years since I left the ship. As we drove across the bridge and spotted BB62, there was a synchronized "WOW!" from the four of us. What a beautiful sight!

Our tour guide was very informative. He took us "downstairs" to the next "floor" (how soon we forget Navy language). Right in front of us on a bulkhead was a sign, which said "GE DUNK". My son and daughter could not believe their eyes. They thought it was just a slang word and not actually an ice cream stand.

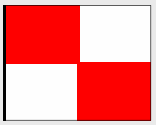
Being in the "R" Division (Damage Control), I was privileged to have the GE DUNK stand, Mess Halls and the Galley as my General Quarters station. And, of course it was fortunate that the GE DUNK stand and the galley were left unattended. Naturally, it was our "duty" to check these areas with the utmost care. Sometimes we would confiscate a couple of gallons of GE DUNK for the enjoyment of the "R" Division men that were on watch. One time, during G.Q., we got caught with our pants down! Not really; it was the door that we took off the GE DUNK stand. Much to our embarrassment, G.Q. was secured early and when the GE DUNK stand operators caught us trying to get the doors on. We convinced them that we had to check certain valves in the stand.

Not to be selective, we also raided the Butcher Shop. We were able to get an 18" to 24" pork loin and sometimes 3 or 4 dozen eggs. We had a stainless steel plate that we made for cooking. Our shop was the sweetest smelling place outside of the Galley. Incidentally, we had the best cooks in the Navy, too. I do not know what the Statute of Limitations is after all these years; but whatever happens, I'm pleading innocent. After all, we ate the evidence."

Ken Loewecke, Shipfitter 2/c, Rockford, Illinois, - USS NEW JERSEY in WW2

(Note: For more information about the origins of the word *"Gedunk,"* please see the Naval Historical Center website at:
http://www.history.navy.mil/trivia/trivia03-3.htm)

"Upon completion of recruit training at NTC, Norfolk, VA., in January of 1942, I was assigned to USS IDAHO (BB-42), while she was still in the yard at Portsmouth, Va. I was ship's company until April 1945, when the Flag Chief Signalman took me into the flag.



During the Okinawa campaign, IDAHO was about to enter Kerama Retto for replenishment of ammo. I was on watch on the signal bridge, and as I looked through my long glass, I spotted the single flag "U" being flown from the Harbor entrance control post on a single halyard. This one letter international signal meant "YOU ARE STANDING INTO DANGER." I immediately shouted out to the OOD what the signal meant. I was informed later that my action probably save IDAHO from running aground, as the channel had not been dredged enough, and was too shallow for battleships to enter….

Another thing I remember, is that IDAHO was the first battleship EVER… to enter a floating drydock… She did it at Efate Island in 1944. Lots of "big brass" on hand to witness the event, and IDAHO made it - no problem, no damage."

SMCS (Senior Chief Signalman,) David Graham, USN (Ret.)- San Diego, California - USS IDAHO (BB-42)
(Note 1: Senior Chief Dave Graham is the Founder, and Chairman of the American Battleship Association)
(Note 2: The fourth *USS Idaho* (BB-42) was launched at New York Shipbuilding Corp., Camden, N.J., on 30 June 1917)

(Official US Navy Photo. USS IDAHO (BB-42) in ABSD (Advanced Base Sectional Dock))

New Jersey Memories…

by Paul Stillwell

(Reprinted with permission, and taken from Paul Stillwell's book ***Battleships***, published in 2001 by Friedman/Fairfax)

"My fascination with battleships started in the mid-1950s when I began assembling Revell plastic model kits that glued together to form miniature *Iowa*-class dreadnoughts. My father and I put together a *Missouri* and decorated it with sewing thread stretched as dress-ship rigging, onto which we glued tiny paper signal flags. Under the Christmas tree one year, I found a model kit for the *New Jersey*. I was intrigued by the curlicue shapes of the camouflage pattern depicted on the ship's side in the painting on the box lid. Little did I realize that the artist had actually depicted a camouflage design used only on the real *Missouri* and not on her sister.

Fast forward more than a dozen years to a time when I was serving on board the tank landing ship *Washoe County* (LST-1165) off the coast of Vietnam. During slow night watches in the ship's combat information center, I looked through ship recognition books that showed pictures of the muscular *Iowa*-class ships as they had appeared when still in commission. And newspapers brought to the LST photos and stories on the reactivation of the *New Jersey* in faraway Philadelphia and then news of her wartime deployment to nearby Vietnam. Concluding that it didn't hurt to dream big and ask, I requested reassignment to the "Big Jay." One evening in early January of 1969, I called my detailer in the Bureau of Personnel. The hearty voice of Lieutenant J.J. Hogan on the other end of the line brought good news: "It looks like I've got a job for you on the 'wagon.'" That was short for battlewagon, and I knew instantly what he meant. But I didn't dream that night—I was too excited to sleep at all. Instead, I lay in my shipboard bunk looked through a recent issue of the *Naval Institute Proceedings* that contained a pictorial article on the *New Jersey*.

Duty on board the *New Jersey* proved to be every bit as enjoyable as I had imagined. She had been the World War II flagship of Admirals Raymond Spruance, Willis Lee, and William "Bull" Halsey. Her physical size and appearance were majestic. As we visited one port after another during a summer cruise, people turned out in droves to see the ship. After her crew had undergone a training stint to prepare for deployment to the gunline in Vietnam, the *New Jersey* served as the flagship for a midshipman training squadron, visiting San Francisco, Tacoma, Pearl Harbor, and San Diego. Everywhere the hospitality was marvelous, as was the public's desire to spend some time on board.

My station for underway watches was in the combat information center, of CIC. Originally intended to be a powder magazine, the space was located on the fourth deck, deep in the well-armored bowels of the ship. It was a realm of radar scopes, status boards, radio speakers, sound-powered telephones, a dead reckoning tracer, and electronic countermeasures equipment—the latter to identify and ward off incoming missiles. Nearby were the plotting rooms from which shipmates ran the shore bombardment operations and fired the guns. When it was time to man battle stations, the crew was summoned with a combination of urgent-sounding signals: voice announcements, the bonging of the general alarm, the boatswain's pipe, and the unmistakable bugle call. The latter was a true throwback to the battleship era of long ago.

Working in CIC, we experienced the outside world only through simulation. Our way of "seeing" the airplanes, ships, and land around us was by interpreting the phosphorescent images on our radar scopes. Or we saw vicariously through the oral descriptions provided by shipmates who were topside and could tell us what was going on. We heard the crackling of radio transmissions as gunfire missions were executed. The sounds of the guns themselves were considerably muted by the casing of steel on all four sides, as was much of the feeling of being at sea. One night, we conducted an intership communication drill with other members of the training squadron. We heard radio announcements from the wave-tossed destroyers as their crews reported lights and windows smashed by stormy seas. Meanwhile, the *New Jersey* plowed rock steady through those same seas. The sensation was much like that of being in a building ashore rather than on bucking waves.

There were so many little things that made the duty enjoyable. For one thing, the chow was always great. For breakfast and lunch, we could just pick a spot at a wardroom table and sit down. Dinner was a much more elaborate affair. Each of us was assigned a silver napkin ring, and for evening meals, the rings were placed on white tablecloths in precise order according to rank and seniority. Since seniority didn't change from day to day, you would sit and talk with the same fellows night after night. The only change would come when someone joined or left the ship. Because of the seating patterns, I never did get to know the ship's first lieutenant, a rugged-looking warrant boatswain named Joe Heeney.

He had been in the Navy longer than I had been alive, and I figured he was the type who ate young lieutenants for breakfast. As a result, I didn't seek him out—to my sorrow. Years later, I happened to see him at a ceremony on board the *New Jersey*, introduced myself, and reminded him that we had once been shipmates. I discovered instantly that he is a warm, friendly man, and we've been in touch ever since. Camaraderie with shipmates was one of the many pleasures in serving on board the dreadnought.

(Continued…)

The time after evening meal brought a special pleasure when I had a chance to go out and walk on the teakwood decks (another throwback to an earlier time), enjoy the fresh air, chat with shipmates, and watch the sun go down. And we were all thrilled to watching the ship crank up to twenty-seven knots (using only half her power plant) to get back to home port for liberty call. Having come from a fourteen-knot LST, I marveled that a ship could move that fast. In fact, this seagoing city called the *New Jersey* could push it up another six knots on full power.

Our first skipper was Captain Ed Snyder, who projected two personas. Regarding professional matters—keeping the ship sparkling in appearance, standing smart watches, being accurate in putting ordnance on target—he was demanding. On the other hand, he enjoyed being breezy or even wacky at times, and took pleasure in making flippant remarks. When asked about the threat from cruise missiles—a very real concern to the U.S. Navy at the time—he said that if one hit the ship he would merely pipe sweepers and have the debris swept overboard. He had two of the former 40-millimeter gun tubs painted light blue inside and dubbed them swimming pools. Once he had one filled with water so he could float inside on an air mattress. The Navy demands that sailors wear hats or caps topside, but Snyder dispensed with this requirement at sea, saying the hats might blow overboard. Instead of being glued to the bridge, he liked to wander the ship and visit with the crew.

In late August of 1969, a new man came aboard to take over. He was Captain Robert Peniston, who referred to the *New Jersey* as "the big ship in my life." When he was a new midshipman at the Naval Academy in 1943, she was the first ship he ever set foot aboard. When he graduated from the academy in 1946, his first assignment as an ensign was to the *New Jersey*. Now came professional fulfillment as her commanding officer in wartime. But it was not to be. Within days of his arrival, the Navy announced that it would be mothballing and decommissioning the "Big Jay" and dozens of other warships. The Vietnam War was winding down, and it was necessary to save money. It was a sad bunch of sailors who watched the change of command ceremony, and it was a man of a different ilk who took over. I had a quarterdeck watch a few hours after we got the new skipper. Out of curiosity, I wandered back to look at one of the "swimming pools" and discovered that it had already been painted regulation gray inside. The new man was strictly by the book. Instead of taking her to Vietnam as planned, he took the ship instead to the naval shipyard at Bremerton, Washington, so she could be decommissioned. Captain Peniston spent much of his time on the bridge during that sad journey.

I made many friends on board the *New Jersey*, but none was more special than the executive officer, Commander Jim Elfelt. In the typical shipboard setup, the skipper is the benevolent father figure and the exec, the duty hard-ass. Elfelt performed the job as executive officer effectively, but also with a great deal of warmth and compassion. He had a special gift for interacting with people. When Elfelt spent time with someone, he made him feel that he was the only other person in the world. The exec listened and cared. When the ship was at Bremerton and preparing to go out of commission, he wrote a note to the crew, saying he hoped that they would look him up in the future. And he meant it, as I discovered years later in Annapolis, after I was working for the Naval Institute. In walked Elfelt one day, by then wearing the uniform of a rear admiral. He had just wanted to say hello to a former shipmate."

THIRD COMMISSIONING CREST (BB-62)...

Commissioning day April 6, 1968.

Captain J. Edward Snyder, Jr., is shown here describing the new crest for USS NEW JERSEY to Secretary of the Navy Paul R. Ignatius,

The ship's 3rd commissioning crest was designed by Sam Kuncevich, an architect-illustrator for the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard.

This photo of Sam holding his crest design, is reprinted here with the kind permission of Mickey Cooper, Author of *"The BIG J Matriarch of the Seas*, by Bookcrafters, and Pub. 1982."

Sam Kuncevich also worked as a young shipfitter in 1941, and helped to build USS NEW JERSEY at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. He continues to serve her today as a Volunteer and Docent aboard Battleship New Jersey.

(1968 Commissioning photo is provided courtesy of RADM J. Edward Snyder, Jr., USN, Ret.)

THE JERSEYMAN
APRIL 2004

"As I was going through my WW2 things, I noticed something that may be of interest. It is one where we elected as our pin-up Miss Harolyn Cheryl Meyer, an 11 month old baby from Newark, NJ back in 1944. Wouldn't it be nice if as a group of old fading sailors, we got to know what ever became of this beautiful little girl? And of course, what ever happened to her father as a prisoner of war in Germany. As I remember, my B Division donated the most of any other Division, and it was to be used for her college education when she grew up. I for one would like to know how she made out over the years, and I thought an article about Miss Meyer from the 60 years between 1944 and 2004 would be nice." **(We'll give it a try Charlie…)**

WT3/c Charlie Welch,
USS NEW JERSEY in #4 Engineroom WW2
Harrison, Ohio.

Editor's Note:
One of our Battleship New Jersey volunteers recently received news that his son is on his way to Iraq. His son is attached to the State of Washington Army National Guard, and the families of this guard unit are making an effort to provide a satellite phone to every platoon. If readers would like to know more about making a donation toward these phones, please check for information at: www.platoonphone.com Thanks...

SHIP'S BELLS
Photos received. Thanks!

NAUTILUS (SSN-571)
MMCS(SS) Bill Syring
Command Senior Chief

USS ASTORIA (CL-90)
PhoM 3/c Herman Schnipper
Hackensack, New Jersey

USS LOS ANGELES (CA135)
Vol. BT2 Bill Sullivan 1950-1954
& ET2 George Bell 1958-1960
Webmaster CA135.org

USS SARATOGA (CV-3)
USS RANGER (CV-4)
Dave DiMarzio

USS INDIANAPOLIS (CA-35)
was built at New York Shipbuilding in Camden, New Jersey,
and commissioned on November 15, 1932.
Among a crew of 1,197, only 317 survived her sinking by IJN Submarine I-58 on July 30, 1945… two weeks before the end of World War 2.

SHIP'S BELLS
Photos received. Thanks!

USS INDIANAPOLIS (CA-35)
Survivor
Coxswain Michael N. Kuryla, Jr.
of Villa Park, Illinois
Rescued by
USS REGISTER (APD-92)
on August 3, 1945

USS EMPIRE STATE
Merchant Marine Training Ship
1931—1945
NY State Maritime Academy
LCDR Phil Dilloway, USN (Ret.)
Sec'y Treasurer
USS Robert L. Wilson
(DDE-847) Ass'n,
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Correction:
Ooops! In the February 2004 issue (Pg 11), we incorrectly listed the service dates of **USSNEWJERSEY.COM** Webmaster and Volunteer **Richard Thrash.** Rich served with the U.S. Army Military Police from 1975 to 1983, and not from 1950 to 1954 as previously reported. We sincerely regret the error shipmate, and especially for adding 25 years to your birthday. I have made an early appointment to have my eyes retested, and trifocals adjusted. - TH

Disclaimer:
The Jerseyman Is an independent newsletter written for and by Battleship New Jersey museum volunteers. Wherever possible, ***The Jerseyman*** requests permission, properly credits, and identifies the author of any photos or quotations used. If readers find any crediting errors, or possible copyright infringements, please let us know and corrections will be made.
Master Chief Tom Helvig, USN (Ret.) - Volunteer Writer/Editor *The Jerseyman*

A Gray Winter's Night...

Why just tour the Battleship New Jersey when you can sleep aboard?

(Reprinted with permission of free-lance travel writer Marshall S. Berdan, as published in The Washington Post on Wednesday, January 14, 2004)

One doesn't normally associate the aesthetically challenged city of Camden, N.J., with unbridled youthful excitement. But that's exactly what emanates from the crowd of kids -- many in Scout uniforms, all bearing overnight gear -- and adults emerging from a city garage into the winter air of the Camden waterfront. They've come from several surrounding states to spend a chilly winter's night, and it's made them giddy.

But then, they aren't here to sleep in New Jersey; they're here to sleep *on* the New Jersey, a World War II battleship, the longest ever built.

As they make their way toward the shadowy mass of the ship -- silhouetted against the skyline of Center City Philadelphia across the Delaware River -- the physical and historical majesty of this floating fortress seems to quiet the crowd. Launched on Dec. 7, 1942, the New Jersey went on to become the second most decorated ship in Navy history (after the carrier Enterprise), earning 19 battle stars in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Beirut and the Middle East before being decommissioned in 1991. Eight years later it returned to the river where it was born as a permanent dockside museum.

By the time the group climbs the modern gangplank and reaches the expansive fantail (rear deck), a silence prevails. Above them, the New Jersey's towering superstructure tapers to a pinnacle of struts, antennae and poles. Looming beyond the campers are three massive barrels of the ship's rear gun turret. Clearly, Scouts, this is not going to be just another camp-out in the woods.

Since opening to the public three years ago, the New Jersey has served as a sort of portal to some of the so-called Greatest Generation's greatest challenges. For most visitors, the standard daytime tour transports them momentarily to the hardships and glories of the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the Marianas and Okinawa invasions. But the more intrepid can chow down in the New Jersey's galley, prowl its decks by night and bunk in its crew quarters.

These battleship sleepovers are called Overnight Encampments, and more than 20,000 young people and their accompanying parents and chaperons have signed on since the program began in 2002. Until recently, it was open only to Scouting and other civic groups (of both sexes) for whom shared berthing areas and communal bathrooms were no hardship. But now families and ad hoc groups are accepted -- as long as they include at least one minor over the age of 7 to satisfy the educational mandate established by the Home Port Alliance, the New Jersey's nonprofit civilian owner.

On the fantail, Encampment Director Doug McCray welcomes each group aboard. McCray will be in command all evening, but his first job is to pass each brigade of one-night sailors over to its respective officer of the deck. For the 13 boys and seven adults of Boy Scout Troop 207 from Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church, that would be Tom Jaskel, a retired Navy lieutenant.

Jaskel leads them to the oval hatchway under those awesome 16-inch guns and down into the New Jersey's well-lit -- and surprisingly well-heated -- interior (battleship gray, natch). After a quick overview of the POD (plan of the day), all rendered in military time (so-many hundred hours) and pointing out the "geedunk" (snack bar), onboard store and "head," he shows them to their berths and reminds them that dinner is served at "1900 hours." He pauses momentarily. "That's 7 o'clock."

Back out on the mess deck, the geedunk is doing a brisk business, catering to the needs of its perpetually hungry (i.e., adolescent) clientele. The five scoutmasters are called together and asked to provide volunteers for the jobs of food servers, flag detail and broadcast announcers. The last, two older boys, soon appear on the closed-circuit monitors nervously reading through the safety regulations. Jaskel himself repeats the main one: "No running! You will not hurt the ship; the ship will hurt you."

Duly warned, everyone returns to his berthing area for the mandatory abandon-ship exercise (aka fire drill), the result of which is that everyone is soon back out on the fantail. After the drill comes evening colors: The flag is lowered to the taped accompaniment of a bugle.

(Continued…)

ENCAMPMENTS...

THE JERSEYMAN
APRIL 2004

The prime view of the Philly skyline over the starboard beam appeals to the more senior campers, but for the majority of rookie seamen, it's straight back down the hatch to join the quickly forming chow line on the mess deck. The line moves through the vast unused portions of the ship's kitchen, a warren of stainless steel, Formica and cast iron. Three volunteer KP attendants spoon out baked chicken breasts, rice and tossed salad onto black plastic plates.

At 2000 hours (8 p.m.), an announcement comes to muster once again on the fantail for a guided tour of the ship. Jaskel begins with a statistical overview of "The Big J," which, at 887 feet 7 inches, is indeed the single longest battleship ever built -- but just barely. (Its builders finessed it so that the New Jersey was three inches longer than its sister ships: the Iowa, the Missouri and the Wisconsin). The specs -- 45,000 tons of displacement, 212,000 horsepower, 2.5-million-gallon fuel capacity -- prompts a younger Scout to ask what mileage it gets. Jaskel is stumped. (Subsequent inquiries reveal the answer to be 0.0024 miles -- about 13 feet P/gallon.)

The tour includes the combat engagement and communications centers, the machine shop, the bridge and the Tomahawk cruise missile launchers before ending in the relatively spacious wood-paneled cabins of the captain and admiral.

By now it's well past 2200 hours, but the geedunk is still open and doing a brisk business in popcorn, hot pretzels and nachos. But by the time taps airs scratchily over the PA system at 2300 hours, most campers are already in their bunks (three-tier "coffin racks"), though not necessarily ready to sleep. The ensuing darkness (there are no portholes on battleships) results in the expected disorder, punctuated by a few bangs and groans as elbows whack into walls and feet flail against lockers.

Reveille comes at 0630, followed by the announcement that "morning chow will be served promptly at 0700 hours." Most campers seem to heed Jaskel's advice that they roll out of their bunks, instead of sitting up, and thereby avoid head-cracking. They then make their way down the narrow corridor to the head. Breakfast is cereal, a lukewarm egg-and-bacon bagel and a tasteless Danish, but the coffee is good and hot.

At 0800 it's all hands back on deck for morning colors (flag raising) and the awarding of souvenir encampment patches. For the next hour, the campers are free to wander the public parts of the ship, but most of them head straight for the forecastle (forward deck) for group photos in front of the guns.

But soon, 0900 becomes plain old 9 o'clock again. Civilian time -- and time to go ashore. Most of the campers take time to mill around the visitor center, shopping for souvenirs of their night in the Navy.

(Encampment photo courtesy of Volunteer Wayne Schofield)

BATTLESHIP TRIVIA... Following are some little known facts about US battleships, submitted by shipmate Charlie Jacobus, (**USS NEW JERSEY**—Korean War), of Auburndale, Florida. We would like to add more of these in future issues. So if you have an interesting battleship fact, and can provide the source along with it, please send it on to ***The Jerseyman***, and thanks! (Answers shown below…)

1. **On which battleship was the first radio apparatus installed?**
2. **Which battleship was the first to have turrets with 3 gun barrels?**
3. **Which battleship was sent to Argentia, Newfoundland in 1943, (during it's shakedown cruise,) to neutralize the German threat of battleship "Tirpitz," while in Norwegian waters?**
4. **In what year did congress authorize the construction of the first three battleships?**
5. **Which battleship had the unbalanced main turrets break free during a storm, and swing wildly to and fro until were finally lashed down?**
6. **Which class of battleships had the first incline-faced turrets?**
7. **Which battleship was fitted with inward-turn props, and later fitted with conventional outward-turn props to improve steering problems?**
8. **Which battleship had the honor of being the lead ship during the cruise of the "Great White Fleet" from 1907-1909?**
9. **During the cruise of the "Great White Fleet" (1907-1909), the fleet had just left Hawaii and was practicing circular maneuvers, when USS NEW JERSEY (BB-16) rammed the starboard side of a battleship. Which ship did she hit during that maneuver**
10. **Can you name 3 US Battleships that were too wide to transit the Panama Canal?**

(Sources for the above : ***American Steel Navy*** by John Alden, CDR, USN (Ret.), Naval Institute Press—1972; ***The United States Navy from Revolution to Date (1916))*** by Francis J. Reynolds, P.F. Collier and Son, 1916; ***Asbury Park Press,*** special supplement, September 16, 1999, and **DANFS-*Dictionary of American Navy Fighting Ships***.)

(Battleship New Jersey and USS OLYMPIA, courtesy of Volunteer Skip DeGlavina)

BATTLESHIP TRIVIA...

1. USS MASSACHUSETTS (BB-2), 2. USS NEVADA (BB-36), 3. USS IOWA (BB-61), 4. The year was 1890
5. USS INDIANA (BB-1), 6. USS ILLINOIS (BB-7), 7. USS VIRGINIA (BB-13), 8. USS CONNECTICUT (BB-18)
9. USS NEBRASKA (BB-14), 10. USS CALIFORNIA (BB-44), USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48), and USS TENNESSEE (BB-43)

(Following Dec 7, 1941, these 3 ships were reconstructed with side torpedo blisters increasing their beam widths to 114 feet. The Panama Canal is 110 feet wide.)

DOCENT RE-QUALIFICATION…

This is but one of several classes recently held aboard ship for Docent (Tour Guide) re-qualification. These volunteer classes are conducted over 2 days to sharpen Docent knowledge levels, and each class involves approximately 20 volunteers at a time. The average age of these shipmates? Average about 71…

Volunteers shown left to right:

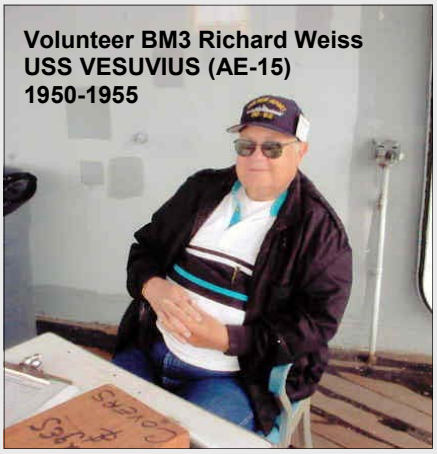
Rear row: Joe Boyle, Jerry Donovan, Carl Arzillo, Bob Crider, Walt Burshtin, Rich Maska

Seated rear row: Skip DeGlavina, Dave Wetherspoon, George LoPresti, Marty Waltemyer, Bill Sullivan

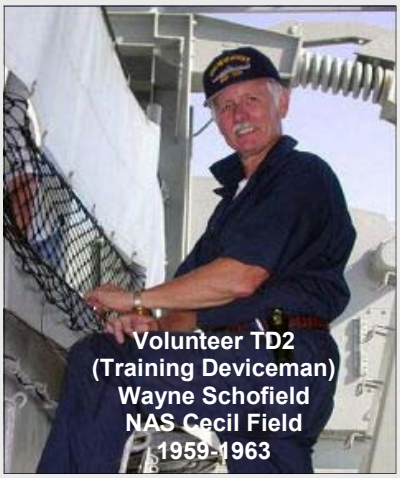
Second row: Bob Brown, Tom Underwood, Milt Lowe, Bob Catando, Gene Carr

Front row: Pete Fantacone, Art Beyer, Ralph Bringhurst, John Dorosky

ABOARD BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY TODAY…



Volunteer BM3 Richard Weiss
USS VESUVIUS (AE-15)
1950-1955



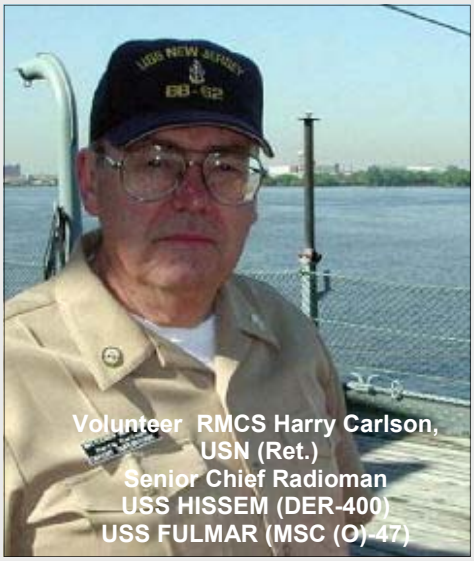
Volunteer TD2
(Training Deviceman)
Wayne Schofield
NAS Cecil Field
1959-1963

Volunteer CWO3
Dick Zuber
1st Army, 30th Ord. Bn.
117th Maint. Co.
41 Years service

Volunteer SK2 (Storekeeper)
Charles Stewart
USS CHELEB (AK-138)
1943-1946

Volunteer George LoPresti
Campbell Soup Co. Retired
R&D Manager

Volunteer BT2 (Boiler Tech.)
Bill Sullivan
Fireroom #3
USS LOS ANGELES (CA-135)
1950—1954



Volunteer RMCS Harry Carlson,
USN (Ret.)
Senior Chief Radioman
USS HISSEM (DER-400)
USS FULMAR (MSC (O)-47)

US NAVY BATTLESHIPS… EPILOGUE

THE JERSEYMAN
APRIL 2004

"Battleships got their name as a contraction of the sailing navy's term "Line-of-battle ships" and, right up to the attack on Pearl Harbor, it was expected that, in the event of hostilities they would sally forth and operate against the enemy's battle line. Only in the Battle of Surigao Strait in 1944 did the U.S. battle line shoot it out with the enemy's, but in the year before, these majestic floating citadels were quite a sight when they operated together. Dusk was a pleasant time for taking some sea air, as this young Marine is doing shortly before World War II. Did he survive the war? If so, does he remember those magnificent ships of old?"

(Photo and caption reprinted courtesy of U.S. Naval Institute, and Mr. Paul Stillwell, Director, USNI History Division.)

NOW HEAR THIS!

It was 60 years ago this year, that *the* greatest naval battle in all history took place. In terms of ship numbers, it was much larger than the engaged ships at the Battle of Jutland. The *"Battle for Leyte Gulf"* comprised 4 separate battles, included hundreds of ships on both sides, and resulted in the final destruction of the Japanese Fleet. But..., it was also at the Battle for Leyte Gulf that USS NEW JERSEY missed her chance to perhaps engage with IJN YAMATO, and IJN MUSASHI... Due to a controversial decision by Admiral William "Bull" Halsey, he turned Flagship USS NEW JERSEY and the Third Fleet to the North, and the Surigao Straits Order of Battle fell instead to the Seventh Fleet and her aging battleships, (five of which were raised from the mud of Pearl Harbor.) They were the *Pennsylvania (BB-38,) Tennessee (BB-43,) California (BB-44,) Maryland (BB-46,) West Virginia (BB-48,)* and the only battleship in this group not at Pearl Harbor on December 7th... *USS Mississippi (BB-41.)* Along with this older battleship battle line were combinations of 9 Cruisers, 18 Escort Aircraft Carriers (CVE's), 11 Frigates, 83 DD's, 25 DE's, and 44 PT boats left to engage, and ultimately defeat the enemy. The much newer, technically advanced, unavailable Battleships of Admiral Halsey's 3rd Fleet, were *New Jersey (BB-62,) Iowa (BB-61,) Alabama (BB-60,) Massachusetts (BB-59,) South Dakota (BB-57,)* and *Washington (BB-56.)*

To record additional stories from the Battle for Leyte Gulf, *The Jerseyman* is asking for the 60 year old reflections of battleship crewmen, and other eyewitness accounts from crews of the other ships that participated in the Leyte Gulf battle actions of Sibuyan Sea, Surigao, Samar, or Cape Engano on 23-26 October 1944. Personal stories about these battles, and any available photos (*we* will return all photos), are being asked for publication in our October 2004 issue of *The Jerseyman.*

We also ask for your assistance, and to hear more from our ship's volunteers and readers! Please let us know... what features of *The Jerseyman* you enjoy reading the most, and what suggestions do you have for future issues?

Please mail to: *The Jerseyman*
62 Battleship Place
Camden, NJ 08103 **Or email to: THelvig@aol.com ... Thanks!**

Stamp Required

"One Nation Under God…"